
VFW POST 604 NEWS

V.F.W. Mission Statement

The purpose of this corporation (VFW) shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its institutions of American freedom, and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies, whomsoever.

WWW.VFW-604.NET

November 2013

Commander's Corner

In last month's newsletter I mentioned that Post 604 in cooperation with Walmart would be preparing care packages to be sent to the frontline troops stationed in Afghanistan. I stated that the dates we would be collecting items were 18 Oct and 2 Nov. That has been changed. We will be collecting items on Friday 1 Nov, and Saturday 2 Nov. The hours are 4 to 8 pm on Friday and 8am to 4pm on Saturday. Volunteers are needed both days.

I have already received a name and address where the care packages are to be sent.

Please mark your calendar and step up to help in this worthwhile project. You can contact me at 812-327-7953 to let me know when you would be available to help. If for some reason you cannot help at Walmart, you can still be a part of the project by donating for a Poppy and items from the wish list to be included in the care packages. Poppies are on display at the post and a can for cash donations. There is also a collection box for wish list items. Items can be donated through 8 Nov.

Think of what this gesture of our appreciation would mean to those troops so far away from home.

The post will again be hosting a Veteran's day dinner on Monday, Nov. 11th immediately following the ceremonies at the court house. Ceremonies at the court house will begin at 10am. Ham & Beans, fried potatoes, corn bread, and deserts will be served. This is free to all.

Need an oil change and full service inspection on your car? Meineke is again giving free oil changes and full service inspections to all veterans on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2013. This offer is good only on November 11th and for veterans only. To get your free oil change you must present a current VFW, AL, Amvets membership card or a valid military ID card.

**For God and Country
Bob Lanning, Commander**

Post 604 Men's Auxiliary

I would like to start off with a **Personal Note, Thanks to everyone concerned about Mary's health.** She was elated over the get well card signed by everyone. Sometimes it takes an illness or accident to find out how much people care. Thanks again!

Now to business. Veteran's Day is fast approaching. The men's auxiliary will host a spaghetti dinner on the Sunday, Nov 10th before Veteran's Day, which is also NASCAR Sunday. This dinner will include spaghetti and sauce, salad, toast, and desert. The dinner is **FREE** to all veterans. There will be a charge of only \$4.00 to all non veterans. This is just one way we can thank each one of our veterans for their service to our country.

More news from national. Starting January 2014 everyone's dues will increase by \$10.00. A word to the wise. Renew your 2014 dues by December 1st and save the \$10.00 increase for 2014.

Well it is time for me to shut up now. Looking forward to seeing you at the Veteran's Sunday dinner.

Tim Haney, President Men's Auxiliary



Post 604 Ladies Auxiliary

We still do not have enough Officers for the Ladies Auxiliary. I have asked for volunteers for several months. I'm sure you would feel proud to be part of our Auxiliary. We have wonderful ladies to work with and are willing to help you any way they can. We need ladies to fill positions in the projects or programs we support year after year. They are, from most to least. (1) Fundraisers for Cancer Aid & Research. (2) Patriotic programs with youth. (3) Sending care packages. (4) Hospital volunteers., (5) Scholarship programs., (6) Making items for veterans, (7) Participating in homeless veterans programs, (Stand Downs, etc), (8) Working on Legislators on veterans and military issues, (9) Donating to Operation Uplink, (10) Other, and (11) Junior Girls Units. We try to have one or two ladies on each Project working together. We would like to have some new ladies join us.

This month donations were from Phillis Grubb for about \$75.00 for the Veterans Hospitals, 60 Cards, 30 bars of soap, 10 deodorants, 10 tooth brushes, 30 tubes of tooth paste, and 20 chap sticks. In response to a request, the Ladies Auxiliary donated 106 Thank You, Get Well, Thanksgiving, and Christmas card to be sent to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Help is needed on the Veterans Day dinner at the post to serve and put food out. Items that are needed for the Veteran's Day dinner are a pan of corn bread, pies, cakes, puddings, or any dish you want to bring.

Keep all in our prayers.

Janet Williams, President VFW Ladies Auxiliary

Senior Vice Commander

Just a few things this month I want to pass on to you. The Men's Auxiliary did an excellent job with the NASCAR dinner again on October 20th. There were quite a few people there, at least while I was there. Their work at the Post is greatly appreciated by all of us and it is nice for them to do what they do and have been doing for the Post.

Regarding the 2013 Membership Drive. The magic number is now 45. That's what we need for us to have 100% membership by November 1, 2013. If you haven't paid your 2014 dues yet, please make an effort to do so for us. Another reminder; if you don't have them paid by December 31, 2013, the dues go up to \$35.00 yearly, so there is good reason to pay them early, especially this year.

One sad thing to report this month. In October, we lost a fellow member, Elton Rockwell. Elton had been a member of Post 604 for quite a number of years. May everyone's thoughts and prayers go out to the Rockwell family during their time of sorrow.

**William (Bill) Evans, Sr. Vice Commander
Membership Chairman**

HOLIDAYS ARE ON THE WAY!!!

The Big Bird Day is fast approaching and the Post will be closed on that Thursday (Nov. 28th) so everyone can enjoy the holiday. But now, on the other hand the Post will most definitely be OPEN on Monday Nov. 11th—**VETERAN'S DAY**—Open at 11:00 am, so when the ceremonies are finished at the court house you can come out to the Post for Ham & Beans & Fixings. Post will close around 6:00 pm or later depending on attendance.

We do apologize for having to cancel last month's 1st Friday of the month Dinner Special but an emergency came up that affected the team that puts these dinners on and we just couldn't get things in order on time. But we haven't given up so the 1st **Friday of the Month Dinner Special** this month will be on **Friday Nov 1st** and we will be featuring our **Meat Loaf with Mashed Potatoes and Corn**---all home cooked and still only **\$5.00!!!!!!** Serving will begin at 6:00 p.m. and go until we run out!! Make sure to get your plate---its goood. Regular menu is also available.

Moving on to **NASCAR SUNDAY**. Nov. 10th Advocare 500 and the Mens Auxiliary is putting on a pretty special meal for that day so be sure and check out their article in this newsletter (we have heard rumors that it has to do with **FREE** Spaghetti Dinner for Veterans—all others are just \$4.00!!). Post will open at Noon and close when race is finished—OK so there you have it—Three days of fine eating plus Pizzas anyday and our **BIG HOT DOGS** each Monday

Hey! we would like to wish everyone a Happy Holiday—Be Safe—**Don't Forget NOV. 11th**

House Committee



Laurens B. Strain – VFW Post 604

November 2013

Closed Sunday	Open 1200 - 2200 Monday	Open 1600 - 2200 Tuesday	Open 1600 - 2200 Wednesday	Open 1600 - 2200 Thursday	Open 1600 - 2200 Friday	Open 1000 - 2200 Saturday
					1 Friday Night Special Dinner 6PM until ??? Care Package Collection Walmart 4 to 8 pm 	2 Care Package Collection Walmart 8 am to 4 pm
3 Daylight Savings Time Ends	4 HOT DOG MONDAY Open @ Noon	5	6	7 * Vet to Vet – 1900	8 Serving Dinner 1800 – 2100  Commander's Drawing 1900 Brad Harris Entertains 1900	9
10 Men's Aux Spaghetti Dinner  NASCAR SUNDAY ADVOCARE 500	11  Veteran's Day Open @ 11AM	12	13	14 * Vet to Vet – 1900	15 Serving Dinner 1800 - 2100  Commander's Drawing 1900 Brad Harris Entertains 1900	16
17	18 HOT DOG MONDAY Open @ Noon	19 Meetings V.F.W. – 1800 Men's Aux – 1800 Ladies Aux – 1800	20	21 * Vet to Vet – 1900	22 Serving Dinner 1800 - 2100  Commander's Drawing 1900 Brad Harris Entertains 1900	23
24	25 HOT DOG MONDAY Open @ Noon	26	27	28  Thanksgiving Day Post will be closed	29 Serving Dinner 1800 - 2100  Commander's Drawing 1900 Brad Harris Entertains 1900	30

(* For Vet-to-Vet Held at IVY Tech, 200 Daniels Way room A118 – Check website <http://www.vetovetbloomington.com/> to confirm location)

Telephone Number (812) 339-2375

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VA Update

The Department of Veterans Affairs continues to report significant progress in reducing the number of outstanding claims. Secretary Shinseki's stated goals continue to be elimination of the claims backlog, processing new claims within 125 days, and 98% accuracy by 2015. Shinseki confirmed these goals in his address to the 2013 National Convention of the American Legion.

However – how very, very, however:

The VA has applied “whack-a-mole management”, striking the highly visible and politically sensitive claims backlog while intentionally neglecting other critical functions which are now raising their ugly mole heads. I recently talked by telephone with a friend who works within the Indianapolis VA Regional Office. She checked on a veteran's appeal which was filed early in 2012. It's still in the untouched stack and will remain there for the foreseeable future. As the veteran said, with all seriousness and no longer rhetorically, “I may die before I hear anything on my appeal.” In this veteran's case, winning the appeal will ultimately, someday, over the rainbow, mean an increase in his compensation of over a thousand dollars per month. This veteran has not been able to work since 2005 due to his several severe service connected disabilities. He is in financial hardship. No doubt many veterans who have had appeals pending for years have died during this period of intentional neglect. In a macabre trickledown effect, these first delays cause secondary delays in processing surviving spouses' claims for death benefits.

There are two reasons for the extended delay in the Indy Appeals Team even looking at the veteran's appeal. First, the VA Central Office under Shinseki has mandated that all VA regional office employees qualified to work initial claims will do so and neglect any other duties. The Appeals Team's “any other duties” are appeals. Second, my VA friend was speaking to me on her first day back from the government shut down. The flow of thousands of incoming new claims did not stop during the furlough. Much of the VA's narrowly focused progress in reducing the backlog was lost because of Congressional political childishness, which – trickledown again – means more months before our example veteran's appeal is even opened. Imagine the VA employees desperately bailing out a leaking boat. About a year ago the rate of bailing (claims completed per month) finally exceeded the rate of leaking (incoming claims). The water in the boat (backlog of new, unprocessed claims) actually started to slowly decline. The Congressmen who used shutting down government as a political ploy stopped the VA employees from bailing for 16 days. But the VA boat continued to leak and the water level went back up.

Sticking with the VA boat analogy: while the employees continue to face inboard and bail as hard as they can there are torpedoes getting closer and nobody seems to care – and these threats are

of the VA's own making: adjudication errors and associated appeals. VA spokesmen report, evidently believing what the regional offices tell them, adjudication accuracy rates progressively increasing to over 90%. But the American Legion stated before Congress in September that these VA data are “inconsistent with our Regional Office Action Review visits nationwide, where errors are found routinely in over half of the cases reviewed.” Claimants who meekly accept erroneous, “get this case off my desk now” VA denials will remain cheated, and their cases are unlikely to ever show up as errors in the VA data. Claimants who file appeals before the Board of Veterans Appeals are winning over 70% of their cases. What does that tell us about the initial processing accuracy? Processing an appeal is time consuming and expensive for the VA, but this additional effort occurs later in the timeline of the claim. The VA remains primarily concerned about the near term: “What will please Congress now?” They remain oblivious to processing errors which result in disservice to veterans and ultimately increase overall employee work time due to appeals. They point to increased training and streamlined methods, but the bottom line is that the VA does not include accuracy in employee performance appraisals. As Patton told his officers, “Soldiers will do what you review, and not do what you don't.” The VA reviews how many cases the employees crank out, regardless of the quality. If the water in the boat (backlog of new cases) was the only threat to the vessel, that might make a heartless kind of sense. The VA will stay afloat (look good to Congress). But the twin torpedoes will assuredly strike soon (poor accuracy and appeals) – nay, they have hit already – and are the greater long term threats. Only now is the VA grudgingly considering adding an accuracy metric to employee performance appraisals.

Why has not the VA previously reviewed employee adjudication accuracy? Every other federal employee performance appraisal system I have ever known has included quality metrics. During my short time as a human resources contractor I helped teach a two day course in establishing performance standards. Two days. With breaks every hour and for lunch. We might conjecture that the unpleasant parts of reviewing quality performance standards, communicating bad news to the employees and helping a marginal employees do better, are somehow frightening to VA supervisors. ‘Easier to avoid unpleasantness by faking accuracy data and reporting that to Central Office. Somehow the real customers have been forgotten. Who are the real customers? Oh, yeah! Veterans! I knew that

John Tilford – Service Officer

Laurens B. Strain V.F.W. Post 604
2404 W Industrial Park Drive
Bloomington, IN 47404-2690

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